

The Prohibition Plebiscite.

IS IT TO BE UNTRAMMELLED AND FAIR?

On May 13th, 1897, a deputation representing the liquor interests of Canada, waited upon the Dominion Government and expressed a desire that the proposed Plebiscite should not take the form of a vote upon the abstract question of prohibition. The deputation argued that if prohibition were enacted it would involve a loss of revenue which would have to be replaced by direct taxation, and that the question to be submitted to the people should be so framed that those voting in favor of prohibition would also vote for direct taxation. A statement was published in some newspapers to the effect that the Government agreed with the liquor sellers' proposition, and intended to frame the question to be submitted in the Plebiscite so that electors would vote upon both prohibition and direct taxation. This suggestion called forth many strong expressions of public disapprobation. Many large and representative ecclesiastical organizations and other bodies denounced its unfairness. To some of these forcible deliverances which are hereinafter quoted, the Executive Committee of the Dominion Alliance respectfully invites attention.

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL BRANCH DOMINION ALLIANCE.

Toronto, July 14th, 1897.

Resolved, that we confidently look for the prompt introduction of the promised bill at the next session of Parliament, and respectfully request (1st) that the basis of the vote be the franchise on which the next Parliament will be elected, and (2nd) that the issue of prohibition be submitted separate from all other questions of public policy. Especially do we object to any method of raising revenue being joined with prohibition in the vote, as the problem of revenue has been, is, and will continue to be a public question, large and important enough to be dealt with by itself.

THE COUNCIL OF THE DOMINION ALLIANCE

Adopted the same Resolution at Toronto on July 15th, 1897.

THE QUEBEC PROVINCIAL BRANCH DOMINION ALLIANCE

Adopted the same Resolution at Montreal on February 24th, 1898.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Winnipeg, Man., June 17th, 1897.

That our people are hereby earnestly exhorted to use their utmost endeavors in every lawful way to carry the Plebiscite in favor of prohibition by an overwhelming majority, and thus free the church from one of its deadliest foes, our land from untold misery and shame; and further, this Assembly would express the sincere hope that the Dominion Government will submit this question to the electors at the earliest convenient date, untrammelled by any other political or financial issue.

MANITOBA AND N. W. T. PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD.

Winnipeg, Man., November 11th, 1897.

The Synod would urge upon all those under its jurisdiction, when the proposed Plebiscite is submitted, to vote for the enactment of a prohibitory liquor law. And it expresses the hope that the question of prohibition will be submitted to the vote of the people untrammelled by any other consideration.

MONTREAL METHODIST CONFERENCE.

Ottawa, Ont., January 3rd, 1898.

Whereas, This Conference having learned that an attempt is being made to influence the Government to submit the question of direct taxation in connection with the promised Dominion plebiscite on Prohibition: and

Whereas, It is the strong conviction of this Committee that the introduction of any other issue than the direct and sole issue of Prohibition in the plebiscite would be a direct subversion of the distinct pledge given by the political party now in power in the platform on which it appealed to the country, and on which it secured the people's mandate in the general elections of 1896; therefore be it

Resolved, That in the judgment of your Committee the only fair and honorable way to submit the question to the vote of the electors in the impending crisis is on the single and distinct issue: Are you in favor of the immediate prohibition by the Dominion Parliament of the importation, manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage.

TORONTO METHODIST CONFERENCE.

Toronto, Ont., June 9th, 1897.

Resolved, That this Conference, while expressing profound regret that the Dominion Government found it necessary to postpone consideration of the Plebiscite question during the present session of Parliament, trusts that not later than the early part of next session the Government will proceed to fulfil its solemn pledge by introducing in Parliament a measure for submitting to the people the question "Are you in favor of the total suppression of the Liquor Traffic?" and confidently expects that this question, when submitted, will not be rendered confusing by the addition of other questions in reference to modes of taxation or anything else.

HAMILTON METHODIST CONFERENCE.

Brantford, Ont., June, 3rd, 1897.

Touching the fact that representatives of the liquor interest, in waiting upon the Dominion Government, requested that in the approaching Plebiscite the method of dealing with the revenue factor shall be submitted to the people, as well as the main question, your Committee would respectfully protest against such a proposal, and for the following reasons:

(a) A readjustment of financial methods is involved in the main question of prohibition, and an affirmative vote necessarily carries with it consent to share the burden of readjusted taxation.

(b) Methods of taxation are divisive issues. It would greatly embarrass a vote on the main question to introduce a second divisive issue.

(c) The Government having pledged itself to a Plebiscite the temperance people had a right to assume that, as in the Provincial Plebiscite, the expression would be confined to the main issue.

Your committee is further strongly of the opinion that it is a mistake to assume that direct taxation is a necessary concomitant of prohibition. It has been clearly shown, that a slight readjustment of present methods could be made to produce several millions of revenue, and, moreover, a Government that has the confidence of the people may safely be entrusted with the responsibility of adjusting taxation to the new conditions.

LONDON METHODIST CONFERENCE.

London, Ont., June 3rd, 1897.

That we have considered the memorials received from several districts in respect to a Dominion Plebiscite on the question of prohibition, expressing the opinion that this question should not be complicated with any other issue. We are fully in accord with this judgment, and declare it to be our opinion that, no matter what issue may grow out of this question, the only honorable way for the Government to present the issue to the electorate is to give the people an opportunity to give an affirmative or negative reply to the query, "Are you in favor of the total prohibition of the liquor traffic in the Dominion of Canada?" inasmuch as it is in accord with the sentiments expressed by the Hon. Mr. Laurier, when a deputation from this Conference waited upon him at Stratford, June, 1896, at which time he said, in regard to the question of a Plebiscite vote, "Up to this moment this question has never been approached by the electors free from other considerations; whenever it has been submitted to the electors it has always been submitted along with other questions that affect the public mind. We deem it wise to separate it from all other considerations, and test public feeling on the matter, and that we shall do when we come into office, as I believe we shall," and that a memorial to this effect be presented to the Government.

BAY OF QUINTE METHODIST CONFERENCE.

Bowmanville, Ont., June 18th, 1897.

We are of the opinion that the proposed Dominion Plebiscite should be fairly presented to the electorate with full and definite information as to any financial burden it may entail. At the same time we are of

the opinion that the extinction of the liquor traffic would so tend to increase general prosperity and augment other sources of revenue that the financial loss and the difficulty of providing for the same would only be temporary; that the country will be better able to bear the burdens of public expenditure without than with the liquor traffic; that all temperance people should be quite willing to bear their fair proportion of such temporary burden of taxation as the changed conditions may necessitate; that there are many sources of revenue available to the Government over which such temporary losses may be distributed, and there is no necessity of raising such deficiency in any particularly obnoxious way. And as many citizens of the country are strongly opposed to direct taxation, we feel that there would be no necessity of raising any considerable proportion of such deficiency in that way, and consequently no necessity of coupling the issue of direct taxation with that of prohibition; and the coupling of these issues upon a ballot, as has been suggested by some, would tend to unfairly prejudice the vote on the prohibition question.

NOVA SCOTIA METHODIST CONFERENCE.

Liverpool, N. S., June 17th, 1897.

In view of the present condition of the temperance reform in Canada, we, as a Conference, re-affirm our determined hostility to the liquor traffic, and therefore protest against anything being submitted with the Plebiscite to the electors but the simple question, "Do you approve of the prohibition of the manufacture, importation and sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage?"

NEW BRUNSWICK METHODIST CONFERENCE.

Fredericton, N.B., June 24th, 1897.

We regret the postponement of the Plebiscite, and trust that the government of the day will provide for its submission to the electorate at the earliest possible date; but in order to avoid any possible confusion, as well as to set forth the strength of the prohibition sentiment, we are strongly opposed to the association of any question of fiscal policy with the main and important issue—the absolute prohibition of the liquor traffic.

MANITOBA AND N. W. T. METHODIST CONFERENCE.

Portage La Prairie, Man., June 15th, 1897.

Commissions have been placed in our hands from several districts, re the taking of a Dominion Plebiscite, we recommend:

That inasmuch as the addition of any question or questions to the simple one of "prohibition" is necessarily confusing to the mind of the electorate and will tend to prevent the free expression of public opinion; and inasmuch as it is the duty of the House of Commons to settle the details of ways and means for providing the necessary revenue for the country, and

Whereas, Premier Laurier did pledge himself to the London Methodist Conference, held at Stratford, Ont., June, 1896, that the question would be submitted to the electorate of Canada entirely apart from all other questions,

This Conference respectfully demands that the Government fulfil its pledges to submit the simple question to the electorate apart from every other question or issue, and that it be submitted at the earliest possible moment.

CONGREGATIONAL UNION, ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

Kingston, Ont., June 15th, 1897.

It has been rumored that the question of direct taxation to meet the revenue deficit in case prohibition becomes law, will be appended and the people asked for their opinion on it. This has drawn forth universal disapprobation from the temperance people. And in this feeling your committee fully share, for it is hardly fair to tack to the question of prohibition the question of supplementary taxation. That there would be a loss of revenue is conceded, but we cannot tell beforehand with anything approaching exactness what this loss would actually be. The money saved from liquor would be expended on other dutiable articles, and the revenue deficiency would thus in great part be made good. Yet the question of finance is so entirely foreign to the question on which it is proposed to ascertain the people's will, that it is difficult to account for the action of a Government in combining the two.

Your committee submits the following recommendations :—

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3. That we protest against the attachment of a rider to the prohibition plebiscite as to the form of taxation.

4. That as a denomination favoring a prohibitory law, we earnestly urge upon the people of our churches in Ontario and Quebec, the importance of voting for prohibition, regardless of the conditions that may be attached to the form of its submission.

MARITIME PROVINCES CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

Milton, N.S., July 12th, 1897.

To the Hon. Wilfrid Laurier, Premier of Canada. *Resolved*, The Congregational Union of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, in convention assembled, desire to express our appreciation of the promise of your Government to have a plebiscite taken upon the question of prohibition; and we would urge that the question be submitted without any reference to the question of revenue.

BAPTIST CONVENTION ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

London, Ont., May 26th, 1897.

Whereas, the adoption of prohibition does not, in our opinion, necessarily involve direct taxation as the only method of securing a sufficient revenue, and

Whereas, we do not think it just to attach to the Prohibition Plebiscite a rider which confuses the issue by bringing forward a revolutionary fiscal policy, which is not made necessary by prohibitory legislation. Therefore,

Resolved, that this Convention, which represents over 200,000 of Her Majesty's loyal subjects, express its strong dissent from the proposal to complicate the important question of prohibition with that of the monetary policy of the country.

BAPTIST CONVENTION OF MARITIME PROVINCES.

St. John, N.B., August 25th, 1897.

For years our denomination has demanded prohibition. Let us not descend to ask for anything short of it. The Plebiscite is not our child. It is not prohibition. Not even total abstinence. If, however, the Government of Canada gives us a chance to speak "yes" or "no" we must do our best to make our reply most emphatic. We are not asking for a second edition of the Royal Commission, and declare that such a question as the Plebiscite must not stop our demand for prohibition. If Parliament proposes to give a Plebiscite mixed with something else 50,000 Baptists in Maritime Canada should unite in a mighty protest.

NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE, FREE BAPTIST CHURCH.

Yarmouth, N.S., September 8th, 1897.

We have no sympathy with any political stratagem, and no regard for expediency when moral principle is at issue. The Plebiscite proposed and endorsed by the present Dominion Government, while not what righteousness demands, still has its claims upon us; therefore in the interest of what we are seeking, we ask our people to support the principle of prohibition by going to the polls when submitted to the people and doing all possible to make it effective for good, providing that the said issue is presented as first proposed, namely, "yes" or "no" as to prohibition, and endorsed by temperance leaders; otherwise we ask all our people to ignore it.

FREE CHRISTIAN BAPTIST CHURCH OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

Fredericton, N.B., October 9th, 1897.

We believe in prohibition by a Dominion law. While the Plebiscite was not of our seeking, we think if fairly taken the temperance cause has nothing to fear; we think the Plebiscite should be a straight Yea and Nay pronouncement on Prohibition. This Conference most emphatically protests against any other submittal, either in restrictions or complications with other questions, as revenue, compensation, etc. If properly presented we urge our people to do all in their power to make the election a victory for temperance.

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION.

Brantford, October 15th, 1898.

Resolved, That we hold it but just that the Government should redeem its pledge to the people by giving them a Prohibition plebiscite pure and simple; we therefore regret exceedingly, and protest vigorously, against the proposition, to couple with it the question of direct taxation, believing that to get a true consensus of opinion, the vote should be upon the promised issue, and that alone.

QUEBEC PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION.

Standstead, P.Q., September 28th, 1897.

Resolved, That while we regret that the Dominion Plebiscite has been delayed our position on this question is unchanged. We look to the Federal Government for the fulfilment of its pledge to grant a

Dominion Plebiscite early in the next session of Parliament, and in the event of its carrying for prohibition to grant us a Dominion prohibitory law. We believe that the question be submitted to the electors should be: "Are you in favor of the total prohibition of the manufacture, sale and importation of intoxicating liquors, for beverage purposes?" and that this question should not be encumbered with any question pertaining to revenue or taxation; but that the result should be determined by a majority of the votes cast,

Resolved, That we do our utmost to make the Plebiscite victorious for Prohibition.

NOVA SCOTIA PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION.

Windsor, N.S., October 5th, 1897.

Realizing the sin of the legalized liquor traffic, therefore

Resolved, In view of the decision of the Privy Council, and the promise of the leader of our own Government, we believe that it is our duty to put forth united effort to bring about prohibition for the Province, no less than for the Dominion, and urge upon the electorate that the Plebiscite be taken on its own merits, without side issues.

P. E. ISLAND PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION.

Kensington, P.E.I., June 7th, 1897.

Resolved, That in view of the promised Plebiscite vote, the W.C.T.U. of this Province urge the Dominion Government not to insert the objectionable clause regarding revenue in presenting the question to the electors.

MANITOBA PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION.

Brandon, June 23rd, 1897.

Resolved, That we pledge ourselves to do all in our power to influence public sentiment in favor of a Plebiscite, which shall declare for the immediate enactment of a prohibitory law, and that we view with alarm and indignation any attempt to complicate so important an issue by coupling with it the question of direct taxation.

NEW BRUNSWICK GRAND DIVISION SONS OF TEMPERANCE.

St. John, N.B., October 18th, 1897.

Whereas, It is feared that in the Plebiscite vote to be taken in the near future on the question of prohibition, some other questions may be introduced into the contest:

Therefore Resolved, That a memorial be forwarded from this Grand Division to the Federal Government protesting against any other question being mixed up with it, and praying that the vote may be simply yes or no on the prohibition of the liquor traffic. And

Further Resolved, That this Grand Division will take no part in any such vote if the question of prohibition is hedged about by any conditions whatever.

NOVA SCOTIA GRAND LODGE I. O. G. T.

Baddeck, N.S., July 6th, 1897.

We note with dissatisfaction the course pursued by a section of the Government press in its unreasonable and uncalled for opposition to prohibition, and its proposals to encumber the direct question with questions relating to taxation and other foreign matters.

GRAND LODGE OF CANADA I. O. G. T.

Toronto, June 17th, 1897.

We strongly oppose the suggestion of the liquor party that the question of revenue should be coupled with that of prohibition, as most unfair to the temperance people. It is the pronounced decision of this Grand Lodge that this question should not be complicated with any other issue no matter what issues may grow out of the question, believing as we do, that the only honorable way to present it to the electorate is to give the people an opportunity to give a reply to the single query, "Are you in favor of the total prohibition of the liquor traffic in the Dominion of Canada?"

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND GRAND LODGE I. O. G. T.

Charlottetown, July 6th, 1897.

Therefore Resolved, That we, the members of the Grand Lodge and voters having the interests of this country and the cause of temperance at heart, would urge most strenuously that the Government will submit the simple question of prohibition to a vote according to the original promise without anything to divert the voters from the main question "Do you desire the prohibition of the liquor traffic or not?" And we would urge upon our representatives at Ottawa to carry out our wishes both by their voice and vote, reminding the members of the Government of their promises during the election contest and thus keep faith with those who supported them under this impression; and with the expectation of a Prohibition Plebiscite pure and simple.

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL GRAND COUNCIL R. T. OF T.

St. Thomas, Ont., February, 1898.

We enter our solemn protest against the proposition that in the submission of the question of Prohibition the question of direct taxation should be attached thereto. We insist that the question should be submitted entirely free from any other question whatsoever. Anything other than this would be, to a certain extent, to prejudice the case, and would be manifestly unfair.

QUEBEC PROVINCIAL GRAND COUNCIL R. T. OF T.

Montreal, P.Q., February 23rd, 1898.

Whereas, The plebiscite was not the form which the temperance people expected the response to their petitions regarding the liquor traffic to take, yet as it is the avowed intention of the Dominion Government to introduce such legislation at the present session of the Dominion Parliament, we are of the opinion that no confusing question should be appended to this legislation, but that it should be a simple "yea" or "nay" vote.

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